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MISCELLANEA.

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I.—*Taxation and Wages in America.*

THE first extract recently appeared as a leading article in the *Times*, and the second as an "occasional note" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

From the *Times*.—

"The Americans at the conclusion of their great war displayed an 'ignorant impatience,' not, like ourselves, of taxation, but of indebtedness, which was natural to a people so happily unacquainted with public burdens. They proposed at first to clear off the whole debt by a voluntary subscription, and they began at once to tax themselves to an incredible extent in liquidation not only of interest, but of principal. It is only now they are recognising the necessity of patience, and the inevitable difficulties of national finance under the new conditions. Seven years ago the whole public debt of the United States was under 14,000,000*l.*; it is now, measured by annual charge, exactly as large as our own. Seven years ago the ordinary expenditure of the Federal Government was about 13,000,000*l.*; it now approaches our own standard—so rapidly have charges of all kinds accumulated since the civil war. On the whole, therefore, the revenue required in America is now almost as considerable as that required here, and we may venture with little hesitation to say that it is far less judiciously raised. The people have been singularly submissive under taxation, but trade is now bad, incomes are falling off, and the distress in the large cities has been very great. Some of these results were probably inevitable, but it is not to be doubted that the Americans would have been wiser had they disregarded for the moment the amount of their debt, and confined their attention to the easiest means of providing for present expenditure.

"Our American correspondence recently informed us that the proceeds of the income tax in the United States, as just ascertained, has fallen off by no less an amount than 30 per cent. from the returns of the previous year, and the fact must necessarily indicate a great decline in the public prosperity. The tax in America is 5 per cent., or a shilling in the pound, on all incomes above 200*l.* We are not told the total sum realised by this impost, but some of the incomes still returned by the principal citizens of New York, for the year 1867, would probably bear a comparison with any figures in our own statistics. Mr. W. B. Astor is taxed for municipal purposes on a property valued at 3,000,000*l.* and upwards: he returned his income last year at about 200,000*l.*, and he actually paid altogether during the year 1867 a sum exceeding 80,000*l.* in direct taxes alone. It is clear that the rich pay for their riches in America, but it is also clear that the accumulation of property, and even of real property, is as great in that country as in this. Perhaps those people who were impressed by Mr. Bright's account of the handful of proprietors who owned half Scotland will be even more surprised to hear that *eleven* persons actually owned one-tenth of all the real estate in New York—a very different kind of property from the moors and forests of the Highlands. One of these opulent citizens was taxed upon property assessed at 1,500,000*l.*, and three others were rated on a capital of nearly 1,000,000*l.* each. Some of the trading

incomes, however much they may have been reduced, are still magnificent in amount. Mr. J. G. Bennett, of the *New York Herald*, returns between 30,000*l.* and 35,000*l.* for the profits of the year; Mr. Bonner, of the *New York Ledger*, little short of 50,000*l.* Mr. R. M. Hoe, the manufacturer of the printing-presses which bear his name, cleared over 20,000*l.* in 1867, and Mr. Delmonico, the hotel-keeper, about 14,000*l.*, while the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher returns an income of nearly 8,000*l.*, or about twice that of an English Bishop. From Cincinnati the largest return for the last year is but 24,000*l.*, from Chicago 40,000*l.* This was cleared by Mr. McCormick, the maker of the reaping machines; but a manufacturer of 'sleeping cars' for railways reported his profits at nearly 15,000*l.* The *Chicago Tribune*, too, must be a flourishing country paper, for it returns 5,500*l.* to one of its proprietors, and 5,200*l.* to another.

"These curiosities, however, of private income are lost in the general evidence of public impoverishment. A decline of nearly one-third in the profits of trade throughout the country is a very serious fact, and one which may well induce the Americans to reconsider their principles of finance. Some of this decline is probably incidental to the transition from war to peace, but all through the Union there is a cry against the pressure of taxation, though as yet there is no general or effective demand for economy or retrenchment. The Americans have not emancipated trade, nor placed their reliance upon enterprise and industry; they have preferred to resort to the embarrassments of protection, with the vain hope of balancing the claims of classes and excluding the foreigner from the national market. They are now discovering the natural results of the system. No class of producers is satisfied, while the aggregate of consumers is left to suffer. Every protected interest clamours for more protection, and the nation at large struggles against high prices, bad trade, and heavy burdens. The other day it was affirmed in the House of Representatives, and not contradicted, that whereas a ship of 1,000 tons could be launched at Liverpool for 10,000*l.*, it would take fully 20,000*l.* to build such a vessel at New York. 'The tariff,' added the speaker, 'was the reason. The decay of American shipping was caused by the tariff.'

"We look upon this policy with some surprise, because it appears to us that our own experience ought to be available for the benefit of others. We have gone through these difficulties, or, rather, we have learned how to support them. Leave industry and enterprise free and the national income will grow of itself. Of course, all States must have their ups and downs, and some periods will be less prosperous than others, but the true principles of national finance remain unaffected by such vicissitudes. There is no reason why the Americans should suffer from the pressure of their debt. It is no such trifle as they fancied it three years ago, but it is certainly not beyond the capacities of such a nation to sustain, and these capacities, it must be remembered, should improve every year. The Americans have prospects before them exclusively their own. The nation which has to provide 26,000,000*l.* a-year for the interest on its debt is now a nation of some 30 millions; it may hereafter be a nation of 100 millions. To the growth of its public wealth it is hardly possible to put any limit—the only condition is that it should be allowed to grow.

"We have never witnessed in this country since the establishment of the income tax, twenty-five years ago, such a phenomenon as a decline of one-third in its yield. We may almost say that up to this moment we have hardly seen any decline at all, but a steady, continuous, and unbroken rise. The penny in the pound, which used to produce 1,000,000*l.*, came by degrees to produce 1,400,000*l.* Last year, for the first time, the yield was reported, in consequence of the financial panic, to be somewhat falling off, but the facts are not yet clear, and Mr. Hunt in his latest statement spoke with greater confidence than at first. Yet we have certainly had our share of troubles, and the cotton famine in particular, was a trial of extreme hardship. Hitherto, however, one thing has always compensated for another, so as to leave the national prosperity as clear and the national revenue as buoyant as ever. That fortunate result we ascribe to free trade and unfettered industry. If we lose at one point, we gain at another. If one door shuts, another opens. We are almost compelled to anticipate that the losses of 1866, coupled with

the destruction of confidence which has followed them, may leave some mark on the revenue returns, but we rely upon our system of finance to preserve us from any depression so great as that now recorded in America."

From the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—

"A report by Mr. David A. Wells, special commissioner of the revenue, gives an analysis of the extraordinary change in the cost of labour in America during the last eight years. A careful examination of the books of a rolling mill in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, making band iron, shows that 5,200 dollars a-week was paid in 1866, against 1,700 dollars in 1860 and 1861 for precisely the same amount of labour. The average wages of melters, forgers, and rollers in the mills, working nine hours a-day, was reported to the commissioner to have been, in 1866, 8 dollars a-day. Skilled hammermen, working five days a-week, earned 8 dollars a-day; head nailers, superintending four machines, 11 dollars a-day; and blowers of bottles and makers of window glass, 275 dollars a-month. During the month of May, 1866, the average wages paid in the Pittsburgh glass works were 11 dollars 40 cents a-head per day. Bricklayers and masons earned from 4 dollars to 7 dollars a-day. An examination of the United States statistics of manufactures shows a clear increase in wages in 1866 of upwards of 60 per cent. as compared with the wages paid in 1860. Assuming these to be the rates still current, and that 40 per cent. of the increase is to be accounted for by the depreciation in the paper currency in which wages are paid, there is yet a remarkable margin of advance which must have a disadvantageous effect on all manufacturing operations in the United States; unless, indeed, a corresponding advance has taken place in most other countries, in which case the movement would simply indicate the diminution of the purchasing power of gold, owing to the steady continuance of the gold supply from Australia, California, and elsewhere."

II.—*The Progress of Sanitary Reform.*

THE following article appeared in the *Saturday Review* under the title of "The Privy Council and the Public Health:—

"Thirty years have passed since the Poor Law Board, at the instance of Mr. Chadwick, who was then their secretary, obtained from the late Dr. Southwood Smith that famous report, which is the foundation of sanitary work and legislation in England, 'on some of the physical causes of sickness and mortality to which the poor are particularly exposed, and which are capable of removal by sanitary regulations.' In that period the young science of hygiene has passed through some curious and instructive phases of life. And though it may now be trusted to make its way in the world by its own power and merits, it is well to take account of its past doings, and to consider how we may profit to the greatest degree by its development and maturity.

"In its early days, sanitary science was not a little crippled by the enthusiastic admiration of its nurses. In the evidence that was taken before various commissions, statements about the power of drainage and ventilation to rid the world of almost all its physical and most of its moral evil occur with a frequency and positiveness that amaze the sober inquirer into facts. Not only were all epidemics in a batch to be rendered harmless, but consumption, skin diseases, and deafness, with other maladies, were to be sent, along with poverty and prostitution, down pipe drains, or were to be blown away by blasts of wind. Not content with quietly enlarging the limits of knowledge, but looking from the known out into the unknown with a glass of extra-generalising power, our earlier sanitarians were themselves largely responsible for the scepticism with which practical minds received even the soundest part of their teaching. And yet it could hardly be

otherwise than that reaction from the old apathetic fatalism should take the form of exaggeration of the preventive powers of active interference.

"In those days, while people still hesitated about giving their faith to the heralds of sanitary marvels, the cholera outbreak of 1848 came to strengthen the hands of those who advocated the instant application of all known and imaginable hygienic laws. In that year the first Public Health Act and the Epidemic Diseases Prevention Act were passed. The one was provided for resisting exceptional and imported disease; the other for the permanent defence of the population against every day maladies. The General Board of Health, created to administer these acts, had at once to put forth against cholera all their resources of argument and authority. They insisted on the actual necessity of removing the foul matters on which cholera grows, and declaimed against the view—which had narrowly escaped being acted on in the previous epidemic—that quarantine of countries, towns, and persons was the means to be relied on against extension of the disease. Their principles, and the work founded thereon, were of signal and unmixed service against cholera. They were also, as the result has shown, potent against other diseases which obey laws like those of cholera. But, with a positiveness which is as strange twenty years after as it would have been twenty years before, the General Board of Health proceeded to extend the experience of cholera deductively to all manner of contagious diseases. That epidemic disorders are essentially different in their nature, one from the other; that for each there can be a specific contagion; and that they may spread exclusively or chiefly by contagion—these were treated as notions of a past time, and dismissed in favour of a general premiss that ascribed all epidemics alike to some widely diffused atmospheric influence, localised and determined in character by particular sanitary defects. And this absolute doctrine, with others not more grounded in fact, was applied throughout the ordinary dealings of the board with local authorities. To it, however, common observation, not that of doctors only, speedily began to demur, and the truth that was contained in it rapidly became discredited. No doubt the new and extensive powers of local interference conferred on the central board, were an object of jealousy and dislike, and even some of the wisest of the cholera regulations were contemptuously disobeyed. But this was the greater reason for caution in announcing principles, and for avoiding the introduction into administration of views that had not passed the stage of hypothesis. The construction of the board, again, was adverse to the acquisition of fresh knowledge. It consisted of two benevolent noblemen and a lawyer, for whom existing data necessarily stood in the position of first principles not to be brought into question. Its inspectors under the Public Health Act were engineers duly indoctrinated with the same axioms. A medical member was indeed soon added to the board, but not until the function of providing for the dead was added to its other duties, and in this singular way the sanitary arrangements for the living did come somehow within the compass of current medical science. Yet, even with this addition, the action of the board was steadily guided by the assumption that all needful sanitary knowledge was conclusively attained, and that all administrative action followed from this as a matter of course. We can now see that, just in so far as the medical principles assumed had their basis in truth, the large and vigorous action of the general board was beneficial to the districts to which it was applied. The advantage to the public health gained by this action has recently been measured, and its nature ascertained. It is by no means of doubtful amount; and the experiments thus tried have furnished the materials for an exact knowledge which has yet to bear a further crop of practical results. But, at the time, people who had given credence to the extravagant promises held out to them anticipated that their works of drainage and water supply would at once be followed by obvious effects, and first by the extinction of all epidemics. Instead of this, they found but little change of a kind to be readily appreciated. Here and there an engineering mistake had actually caused outbreaks of typhoid. More commonly a perverse outbreak of scarlet fever or small pox would ravage a town as soon as its works were completed, and would even raise the gross mortality above its former amount. And while the failure of the board's predictions was quickly seen, length of time was wanted for

their real advantages to be discovered. With the disappointment of ill-founded hopes, too, there arose dissatisfaction at expenditure. The influence of the sanitary works, if obscure in other respects, was very perceptible upon the local rates. And an error of judgment of the board had given a handle to cavillers. In order to save the expense of several independent surveys of the same place, the superintending inspectors had been allowed to undertake, as private engineers, the execution of the works which they had officially advised. From these causes the general Board of Health came to lose public confidence, and after some experimental changes of its constitution and three or four grudging renewals, Parliament, in 1858, declined to continue its powers. The Public Health Act of that year transferred to the Privy Council the administration of the Diseases Prevention Act, and left permanent sanitary measures to local authorities, without any central authority to control or compel them, and with only a slight general supervision entrusted to the Home Secretary.

"That the central Government should have renounced the power which the General Board of Health had virtually possessed, of compelling local improvement, appears at first sight to be an immense loss to the cause of sanitary progress. In the absence of cholera, the functions of the Government were restricted to inquiry into matters relating to the public health, and, as a referee on such matters, they were provided with a medical officer. But, except when the Diseases Prevention Act was in force, the duties of that officer were of the most indefinite kind. It is true that the council now had the regulation of public vaccination assigned to them, and their medical officer stood in the place of the presidents of the colleges of physicians and surgeons, who, with other distinguished authorities, had been supposed necessary to advise the Government on the subject. On a perfunctory interpretation of the Act of 1858, therefore, the council and its medical adviser might have confined their ordinary work to any local inquiries that were forced upon them, and to the issuing of rules for efficient vaccination. Such were the limited and occasional duties that seemed to have replaced the large and systematic powers previously exercised by the Board of Health.

"But, in the ten years that have elapsed since the extinction of this board, not only have sanitary works in their ordinary sense multiplied largely in the kingdom, while local authorities have been still in a measure supervised, but the subject of hygiene has gained substantially in public esteem, the functions of Government in regard to health have been more and more recognised, and a store of sanitary facts of the highest scientific importance and practical utility has been amassed. As regards visible results, many important pieces of legislation have been demanded and obtained, and a new department of administration has been erected which, under the force of growing opinion, is each year developing towards a true Ministry of Public Health.

"The small beginning from which these large results have sprung, is to be found in those words of the Act of 1858, which authorise the council to cause inquiry to be made in relation to matters concerning the public health. It is characteristic of our legislation to have provided in no more direct way than this for a central influence over local bodies, and it is equally characteristic of our better statesmanship to have evolved from such a provision a power of opinion that has not only accepted, but called for, extended and compulsory health-legislation. Under Mr. Lowe's vice-presidency, a medical department of the Privy Council was formed in 1861, and the effective work of the office dates from that time. Accepting unreservedly the position of inquirers, it has come about that the council, through their medical officer, have been in a very important manner teachers also. The whole field of medical science has been regarded as capable of furnishing knowledge that might be applied to the prevention of disease, and inquiry has been pursued in chemical and pathological, as well as in statistical and social, directions. Thus the reports of the department are not only looked to by legislators for their immediate practical purposes, but are esteemed among the most exact and valuable contributions made of recent years to scientific medicine.

"The regulation of public vaccination is a striking illustration of the way in which the sanitary functions of the council were exercised. In spite of the high

authorities that had formed the National Vaccine Board, and the existence for years of compulsory vaccination acts, the extensive prevalence of small pox, and especially its unequal distribution in different localities, afforded ground for the presumption that vaccination was correspondingly neglected or ill-performed. It was not enough to issue general mandates against this neglect. The council set on foot an extensive inspection of district vaccination, and continued it from year to year. Large defects in the administration of the vaccination laws, and in the methods of practising vaccination, were discovered, of a nature that accounted in great measure for the continued reign of that terrible disease, small pox. The experience gained in these inspections was put at the service of the authorities in the more backward districts, and more or less improvement of practice was made. And when public opinion was sufficiently informed, a bill for the amendment of the vaccination acts was brought in by the vice-president and carried.

"Inquiries concerning the state of the public health in particular places were called for by the existence of epidemics or by local complaints. It appears by the reports of the department that such investigations have been instituted in some hundreds of instances, and in nearly a hundred cases the inquiry has been made by an inspector sent by the office. Facts not of local importance only, but of general value, alike in medical and in administrative aspects, have thus come to light, and their publication has brought about a large amount of sanitary improvement. This is evidently the class of inquiries primarily contemplated by the Public Health Act.

"If the action of the council had been restricted to duties of this nature, however much they might have satisfied the letter of the law, a small fraction only of the work which has been accomplished would have been done. But they wisely took, on the representations of their medical adviser, a wider view of their functions, not waiting for local complaint or shortcomings, but investigating generally the prevalent causes of disease. Already in 1859 two enemies, an old one and a new, were systematically reconnoitred, and the positions to be taken up against them were defined. Epidemic diarrhoea was shown to prevail in the country, and to be distributed according to local conditions in such a way that if its death-rate in the whole of England could be reduced—not to the rate of the healthiest, but even to ten times the rate of the healthiest districts—twenty thousand lives would each year be saved that now were being sacrificed to it. To the causes of this disease the first general inquiry was addressed, and a definite result, showing convincingly the power of preventive means upon it, was obtained. About the same time the stranger foe, diphtheria, so sudden in its attacks, so fatal in its results, came up for investigation. To track its course, to note its laws, and to learn what means of prevention availed against it, was to strengthen the hands of the medical profession in dealing with an unfamiliar disease, and to allay the alarm that is ever felt on an unforeseen and strange visitation. The next piece of work which the council undertook was an inquiry into the special causes which develop pulmonary disease in various manufacturing districts. Another was into the circumstances that determine excessive mortality among young children in the same districts. The report on infantile mortality, gives a very sad picture of suffering and demoralisation caused by the conditions of female employment in factories, and it suggested some practical methods of mitigating the evil influence of these conditions upon infantile life. The cotton famine also claimed the attention of this department. With the urgent necessity for economy pressing relief committees and boards of guardians on the one side, and famine-fever threatening the distressed districts on the other side, it was of the utmost consequence that trustworthy information should be obtained, and judicious advice given with some show of authority, as to the means by which health could be sustained under very exceptional conditions of living. Ground was soon broken in another part of the sanitary field. Allegations had been made that the flesh and milk of diseased animals were extensively sold, and were productive of injurious effects on man. An elaborate report upon this subject defined the cattle diseases that were proved to be thus injurious to man, and was of much service in refuting some vague generalisations that were beginning to find acceptance.

"What a single year's work speedily became to a department that conducted

its labours on these broad principles might be shown by an enumeration of the investigations reported on in 1863. There was, first, the systematic supervision of public vaccination, with the inspection of 1,143 districts; and of the public vaccine supply which furnished lymph in answer to 15,383 applications. There was, next, an inquiry into the sanitary conditions of 112 places, at 14 of them by office inspectors. But besides this routine work, systematic investigations were carried on into a variety of circumstances that determine the distribution of disease in England;—1. Into the conditions of nourishment among the poorer labouring classes. 2. Into hurtful and hurtfully-conducted occupations, involving working with various metallic poisons, shop and factory employment as productive of lung disease, and systematic overwork by large classes of the population. 3. Concerning residence in marsh districts, an inquiry which brought out some singular evidence as to the waste of infantile life. 4. Into hospital hygiene—a subject upon which exact information was urgently called for, and which was rescued, by this report, from a mass of erroneous and exaggerated statement. 5. On dangers arising to the public health in the conditions under which drugs and poisons are retailed. This is no small development of work comprised in a year's proceedings, under a general power of 'inquiry;' the duties explicitly assigned to the office being by far the smallest part of its business. And much of this voluntary work, as it may be called, of the year has already borne fruits of practical usefulness. It was on the evidence thus submitted that Parliament made, in 1866, provision for keeping factories and workshops as free as practicable from injurious vapours and dust, and for preventing overcrowding in them; a provision which may be regarded as the *habeas corpus* of the artisan. At the same time the more intelligent administrators of our medical charities are already acknowledging the value of the conclusions arrived at on the health of hospitals.

"A simple enumeration may suffice of some of the chief investigations since undertaken by the department. Detailed examination has been made of the house accommodation of the labouring classes, and of the working of the Nuisances Removal Acts. Foreign epidemics, plague, and cerebro-spinal meningitis, which were alleged to be obtaining a footing in neighbouring countries, and cholera and yellow fever; which had actually made lodgments on our own shores, have been studied by competent inspectors; and the whole bearing of the question of quarantine on this class of diseases has been re-investigated. In the presence of cholera, the powers of the council under the Diseases Prevention Act arose for the first time in 1866, not until the ninth year of their existence as administrators of that law.

"That the future growth of sanitary knowledge should be commensurate with its past progress as here summarised is a matter in which the community, and more particularly 'our future masters,' are deeply concerned. At this moment proposed legislative changes are effecting, in an indirect manner, the constitution of the health department, and it is of urgent consequence that they should be so contrived as to facilitate and extend its most useful work."

III.—Agriculture in France.

THE following notice of the earlier portions of the evidence recently collected by the French Government upon the condition of agricultural industry throughout the empire, appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Several folio reports of inquiry have been already published; it is understood that the whole of the information will occupy upwards of thirty volumes:—

"A couple of years ago there went up such a cry from the French agriculturists that the Government felt it incumbent to appoint commissions of inquiry.

The country was divided into thirty zones, and each zone was subjected to the examination of a different commission. The inquiry has terminated, and an immense mass of evidence has been sent to the Minister of Agriculture. Several volumes have already been published, and the information furnished by these printed reports is quite sufficient to show the causes of suffering: these are want of labour, want of capital, want of communication, want of instruction, and the taxes levied on the transfer of property. To this list may be added the subdivision of land, but most of the commissions, though they point out evils attendant on this system, consider it favourable to production. The second question put by the Minister of Agriculture runs thus:—During the last thirty years, what influence has been exercised on the conditions of production by the division of property? The commission for the department of the Manche says the result has been to augment production, but in reply to other questions the same commission points out that the small proprietors have not sufficient capital to improve their farms; that the excessive division of property is an obstacle to the employment of machinery, and again that the principal objection to the division of property is that it renders drainage impossible. The Calvados commission also replies to question 2 that the division of property has augmented production, but deplores the want of capital. In Eure subdivision has been found prejudicial to production, and the commission condemns the practice of dividing the land amongst the heirs on the death of the head of the family. M. Genteur, president of the eleventh zone, gives much valuable information in his report. He says that since 1789 the division of land has constantly progressed, and that, confined within reasonable limits, this system presents two advantages—1st. It is useful as regards the development of production; 2nd. In encouraging the labouring classes to buy property it ‘moralises’ them, interests them in the maintenance of social order, inspires them with conservative sentiments, and keeps them from the temptations and seductions of the town. On the contrary, when exaggerated it gives rise to serious inconvenience, and the legislature should prevent it being carried to excess. According to the Code Napoléon, the father, when dividing his goods amongst his children, is obliged to give each an equal share of all the objects composing his fortune. The opinion of the agricultural world is that this law produces an excessive division of landed property, and that it would be better for the father to share his goods amongst his children according to their tastes and professions. Another commission reports that ‘the extreme division of property is one of the principal causes which prevents the use of agricultural machines.’ And again, when alluding to drainage, ‘the parcelling out of the land prevents the farmers carrying away the water.’ The commissioners admit that the system of division should end somewhere, but it would be a terrible blow to the ideas of 1789 to re-establish the laws of primogeniture even as regards land, and no one would be bold enough to propose such a measure. M. Genteur does go so far as to recommend that the head of the family should be allowed to give his land to one child and his funded property to another, but any bill introduced into the Corps Législatif tending to such a consummation would be vigorously opposed.

“Another cause of agricultural suffering is the want of labour felt all through the country; this is attributed to the army, the development given to various industrial undertakings, and the immense public works being carried on in Paris and other large towns. Everywhere statistics show that the rural population is on the decrease, and that the deaths exceed the births; the peasant prefers the town because the labour is generally lighter, more continuous, and better paid; in fact one can easily imagine the attraction for a Breton, who gets at most half a franc a-day, of ten times that amount to be earned in Paris under Prefect Haussmann. That deaths should nearly everywhere in the country exceed births does not alone depend upon emigration. If we turn to another report, we find that immorality has much to do with the matter, and that there is a general hankering after luxury:—

“‘The good old manners are disappearing day by day, and rustic simplicity is no longer in vogue; luxury and the love of pleasure have invaded the most remote parishes. The number of natural children increases, the number of legiti-

mate ones diminishes. The peasant of to-day is determined not to have children. To counteract this tendency it is demanded that the Government should encourage large families by relieving them from taxation. I am obliged to state that religion is on the wane. The priests are worthy of all respect, but they have lost their influence, and to believe the testimony of many persons, this state of things has been produced in consequence of the clergy preaching dogma rather than morality, and not adhering to those principles upon which modern society reposes.

"Want of capital is another malady which afflicts agriculture. The fever of speculation has spread through the whole country, and the money which used to be laid out in the improvement of land is now invested in railway shares and loans, or squandered on the Bourse. On the other hand, the farmer who desires to get money can only do so by paying an exorbitant interest, for very few proprietors can fulfil the conditions upon which alone the *Crédit Foncier* and *Crédit Agricole* will make advances. The country people also complain of the large amount of stamp duty which they have to pay, and where there are so many forced sales, and where so many persons are left land which they cannot keep, this species of taxation is especially onerous.

"What most of the commissioners demand is that the conscripts not belonging to the active army shall only be called out for drill when there is no agricultural work to do; that there shall be fewer fairs and market days, where much time is wasted; that the stamp duties shall be lowered; that the farmer shall be afforded facilities for getting money; that agricultural instruction shall be given; that some means shall be adopted to prevent the constant emigration to large towns; and some modification introduced into the present law affecting the right of disposing of property by will."

IV.--*A Trades' Union.*

THE following article appeared in the *Times*. The annual reports of this union will be found in the Statistical Society's library:—

"The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners has enjoyed for some time an exceptional reputation among trade unions for good management, prosperity, and strength; and this character, we are bound to say, is apparently maintained in the statements of its last report, which is now before us. The volume itself is evidence at first sight to the respectability of the association. It is as large and as weighty as the reports of our great religious societies, and its frontispiece is a map showing the situation of its 'branches' in various parts of the United Kingdom. These branches are upwards of two hundred in number, comprising between them fully 8,000 members, and the accumulated funds of the union actually in hand exceed 15,000*l.* Yet the society is only in the ninth year of its existence, having risen to its present dimensions since the year 1860, at which time its members were only 600, and its available balance but 320*l.* It deserves, however, to be noted, that last year, for the first time since its foundation, its progress was materially interrupted. There was no actual decline, but, on the contrary, a certain increase both in its numbers and its property; but this increase was considerably less than in former years. In other respects, too, 1867 was a remarkable year for the union, as will presently be seen.

"To find out what a society is doing we look to its accounts, and the accounts of the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners are full, clear, and intelligible. Last year the entire income of the society, derived almost exclusively from payments by its members, was no less than 18,245*l.*, and, as its expenditure during the same period was 16,144*l.*, it is easy to see that even an unprosperous season added upwards of 2,000*l.* to its capital. The critical question, however, concerns the distribution of these outgoings, though here, too, the society comes out creditably

from the inquiry. A good 10,000*l.* of its expenditure was upon 'benefits' of various descriptions. These are classed in the accounts under six several heads. Members out of work 'through slackness of trade only,' receive support in the form of 'donations;' sick members get their 'benefit' according to scale; 'burnt or stolen tools' are replaced by a third benefit; 'funerals' are defrayed from a fourth, and accidents and superannuations (the latter a very small item), make up the list. To these purposes altogether very nearly two-thirds of the society's expenditure was actually applied. Mr. R. Applegarth, the general secretary, whose signature authenticates the report just published, claims credit for the amount of good thus effected, observing that the disbursements of the union in 'donations' alone, 'provided the means of living for a population of upwards of 3,800 persons,' for a period of ten weeks. But his argument on this point is superfluous. Nobody contests the value or utility of trade unions as benefit societies. In this respect the amount of good they accomplish is beyond all question, and needs no proof. There is, however, as Mr. Applegarth is well aware, another capacity in which these unions present themselves before the public.

"We have only accounted for 10,000*l.* out of the 16,000*l.* spent by the Carpenters' and Joiners' Society last year, and it will be asked where the rest of the money went. It was not expended on this occasion to any ruinous extent on 'trade privileges,' or, in other words, strikes. The outlay on this head in 1867 was about 1,800*l.*, or only 10 per cent. of the gross income. But, as we have already said, the year was an exceptional one. The depression of trade was very great, and it explains not only the retarded progress of the society, but the peculiar application of its funds; work was so slack, and so many members came upon the union for help, that there was less money than usual for 'trade purposes' and less disposition to spend it. Thus, as much as 10,000*l.* went upon benefits, and only 1,800*l.* on trade quarrels; but it has not been always so. In the year 1866 the outlay on benefits was only 4,726*l.*, while that on 'trade privileges' was 2,525*l.* In 1865 the comparison is still more striking; in fact, the figures are nearly balanced, for, whereas benevolent purposes took only 2,200*l.*, trade purposes carried off all but 2,000*l.* Again, in the summary of these outgoings for the whole eight years of the society's existence, we find that the aggregate expenditure upon 'trade privileges' nearly equals that upon the support of sick members or the assistance of members out of work. The total 'donation benefit' is 8,138*l.*; the sick benefit, 8,841*l.*; the 'trade' outlay, 7,063*l.* The society, therefore, does its trade work like other unions, though it learnt moderation from last year's distress.

"Still we have brought but 12,000*l.* out of 16,000*l.* to account, and the reader will wonder what becomes of the yet considerable balance. It appears to be consumed for the most part in the expenses of management. Salaries absorb something like 1,300*l.*, and office charges rather more, taking perhaps about 3,000*l.* between them; but this represents, it should be remembered, the demands of some two hundred branches. There is, as far as we can discern, no obviously questionable item in the account, though it is deplorable to see 148*l.* set down to 'defalcations,' and the charge, it may be hoped, is not of yearly occurrence. Delegations cost 200*l.*, council meetings 64*l.*, and law expenses 7*l.*—not a heavy liability. At one point only does the financial management of the society appear rather doubtful. It possesses, as we have said, an accumulated capital of 15,000*l.*, and as much as 13,000*l.* stood to its credit in December, 1866. Yet, while no more than 166*l.* is carried to profit as 'bank interest,' as much as 72*l.* is put down to loss as 'bank expenses;' so that the society gained only 94*l.* in the year from a money balance of 13,000*l.*

"Wherever branches of this society have existed for any length of time, reductions of working hours and increase of wages have followed.' That brief statement is probably conclusive in the eyes of members as to the advantages of unionism. We might ask at what expense these gains were acquired, and how long they lasted; but we shall not at present open that inquiry. Whereas, however, Mr. Applegarth insists with peculiar emphasis on the inequalities of wages at various places, and obviously considers that they should be redressed by the influence

of unionism, it is obvious to ask on what principle he would proceed. Workmen in the trade, he says, get 37*s.* a-week in one place, and 20*s.* in another; does he mean that the former rate is necessarily all right and the latter all wrong? Would he make the receipts in each case 28*s.* 6*d.*, or would he at once raise the 20*s.* to 37*s.*? In the presumption from which he starts he is certainly wrong. He maintains that there is no great difference nowadays between the cost of living at one place and the cost of living at another; but that proposition cannot be sustained. Railways have done much in the way of levelling, but the prices of all commodities, even of money, still vary in various places, and it is not unnatural that the price of labour should vary also.

“ In the general conclusions, however, of the report before us we can cordially join. Mr. Applegarth is not content with advocating unionism as it is; he frankly confesses that ‘there needs union beyond it,’—union not only among men against masters, but among masters and men together. He—experienced as he is in such matters—speaks more positively than we ventured to do upon the practicability of arbitration. ‘The policy of employers is to combine with us, and not against us; and with the assistance of men like Mr. Rupert Kettle and Mr. Mundella—men of practical experience and sound judgment—with the result of their efforts in the past before us—we have every reason to believe that, though employers and workmen will each maintain their respective unions, arbitration will form the connecting link of ‘union’ between them. Let there be, then, a board of arbitration in every town in the United Kingdom; for this the workmen are ready. We shall then, in nine cases out of every twelve of our differences, be able to arrive at a mutual settlement.’ To this we can only say, that if the carpenters and joiners will take the lead in bringing such a consummation to pass, they will do much to confirm the reputation their union has already acquired.”
